"Whereas, before the passing of an act of the fifteenth of his present majesty, many colliers, coal-bearers, and salters *were bound for life to, and transferable with, the collieries and salt-works where they worked*, but by the said act their bondage was taken off and they were declared to be free, notwithstanding which many colliers and coal-bearers and salters still continue in a state of bondage from not having complied with the provisions, or from having become subject to the penalties of that act," etc. The new act then proceeds to declare them free from servitude. The slaves formerly earned only enough to keep them, and laid by nothing whatever for the future. Hence we say that the improvidence of the colliers, as of the iron-workers, is but a survival of the system of slavery in our political constitution.

Matters have now become entirely different. The workman, no matter what his trade, is comparatively free. The only slavery from which he suffers is his passion for drink. In this respect he still resembles the Esquimaux and the North American Indians. Would he be really free? Then he must exercise the powers of a free, responsible man. He must exercise self-control and self-restraint, and sacrifice present personal gratifications for prospective enjoyments of a much higher kind. It is only by self-respect and self-control that the position of the workman can be really elevated.

The working-man is now more of a citizen than he ever was before. He is a recognized power, and has been admitted within the pale of the constitution. For him mechanics' institutes, newspapers, benefit societies, and all the modern agencies of civilization, exist in abundance. He is admitted to the domain of intellect; and, from time to time, great thinkers, artists, engineers, philosophers, and poets, rise up from his

order, to proclaim that intellect is of no rank, and nobility of no exclusive order. The influence of civilization are rousing society to its depths; and daily evidences are furnished of the rise of the industrious classes to a position of social power. Discontent may, and does, exhibit itself; but discontent is only the necessary condition of improvement; for a man will not be stimulated to rise up into a higher condition unless he be first made dissatisfied with the lower condition out of which he has to rise. To be satisfied is to repose; while, to be rationally dissatisfied, is to contrive, to work, and to act, with an eye to future advancement.

The working-classes very much underestimate themselves. Though they receive salaries or wages beyond the average earnings of professional men, yet many of them have no other thought than that of living in mean houses, and spending their surplus time and money in drink. They seem wanting in respect for themselves as well as for their class. They encourage the notion that there is something degrading in labor; than which nothing can be more false. Labor of all kinds is dignifying and honorable. It is the idler, above all others, who is undignified and dishonorable.

"Let the working-man," says Mr. Sterling, "try to connect his daily task, however mean, with the highest thoughts he can apprehend, and he thereby secures the rightfulness of his lot, and is raising his existence to his utmost good. It is because the working-man has failed to do this, and because others have failed to help him as they ought, that the lot of labor has hitherto been associated with what is mean and degrading.

With respect to remuneration, the average of skilled mechanics and artisans, as we have already said, are better paid than the average of working curates. The working engineer is better paid than the ensign in a

marching regiment. The foreman in any of our large engineering establishments is better paid than an army surgeon. The rail-roller receives over a guinea a day, while an assistant navy surgeon receives fourteen shillings, and after three years' service, twenty-one shillings, with rations. The majority of dissenting ministers are much worse paid than the better classes of skilled mechanics and artisans; and the average of clerks employed in counting-houses and warehouses receive wages very much lower.

Skilled workmen might—and, if they had the will, they would—occupy a social position as high as the educated classes we refer to. What prevents them rising? Merely because they will not use their leisure to cultivate their minds. They have sufficient money; it is culture that they want. They ought to know that the position of men in society does not depend so much upon their earnings as upon their character and intelligence. And it is because they neglect their abundant opportunities—because they are thriftless and spend their earnings in animal enjoyments, because they refuse to cultivate the highest parts of their nature—that they are excluded, or rather self-excluded, from those social and other privileges in which they are entitled to take part.

Notwithstanding their high wages, they for the most part cling to the dress, the language, and the manners of their class. They appear, during their leisure hours, in filthy dresses and unwashed hands. No matter how skilled the workmen may be, he is ready to sink his mind and character to the lowest level of his co-workers. Even the extra money which he earns by his greater skill often contributes to demoralize and degrade him. And yet he might dress as well, live as well, and be surrounded by the physical comforts and

intellectual luxuries of professional men. But no! From week to week his earnings are wasted. He does not save a farthing; he is a public-house victim; and when work becomes slack, and his body becomes diseased, his only refuge is the work house.

How are these enormous evils to be cured? Some say, by better education; others, by moral and religious instruction; others, by better homes, and better wives and mothers. All these influences will doubtless contribute much toward the improvement of the people. One thing is perfectly clear—that an immense amount of ignorance prevails, and that such ignorance must be dissipated before the lower classes can be elevated. Their whole character must be changed, and they must be taught in early life habits of forecast and self-control.

We often hear that "knowledge is power;" but we never hear that ignorance is power. And yet ignorance has always had more power in the world than knowledge. Ignorance dominates. It is because of the evil propensities of men that the costly repressive institutions of modern governments exist.

Ignorance arms men against each other; provides jails and penitentiaries; police and constabulary. All the physical force of the state is provided by ignorance; is required by ignorance; is very often wielded by ignorance. We may well avow, then, that ignorance is power.

Ignorance is powerful, because knowledge, as yet, has obtained access only to the minds of the few. Let knowledge become more generally diffused; let the multitude become educated, thoughtful, and wise; and then knowledge may obtain the ascendency over ignorance. But that time has not yet arrived.

Look into the records of crime, and you will find

that, for one man possessed of wisdom or knowledge who commits a crime, there are a hundred ignorant. Or, into the statistics of drunkenness and improvidence of all sorts; still ignorance is predominant. Or, into the annals of pauperism; there, again, ignorance is power.

The principal causes of anxiety in this country are the social suffering and disease which proceed from ignorance. To mitigate these, we form associations, organize societies, spend money, and labor in committees. But the power of ignorance is too great for us. We almost despair while we work. We feel that much of our effort is wasted. We are often ready to give up in dismay, and recoil from our encounter with the powers of evil.

"How forcible are right words!" exclaimed Job. Yes! But, with equal justice, he might have said "How forcible are wrong words!" The wrong words have more power with ignorant minds than the right words. They fit themselves into wrong heads, and prejudiced heads, and empty heads; and have power over them. The right words have often no meaning for them, any more than if they were the words of some dead language, The wise man's thoughts do not reach the multitude, but fly over their heads. Only the few as yet apprehend them.

The physiologist may discuss the laws of health, and the Board of Health may write tracts for circulation among the people; but half the people can not so much as read, and of the remaining half, but a very small proportion are in the habit of *thinking*. Thus the laws of health are disregarded; and when fever comes, it finds a wide field to work upon: in undrained and filthy streets and back-yards—noisome, pestilential districts—foul, uncleansed dwellings—large populations

ill-supplied with clean water and with pure air. There deaths makes fell havoc; many destitute widows and children have to be maintained out of the poor-rates; and then we reluctantly confess to ourselves that ignorance is power.

The only method of abating this power of ignorance is by increasing that of knowledge. As the sun goes up the sky, the darkness disappears; and the owl, the bat, and the beast of prey slink out of sight. Give the people knowledge, give them better education, and thus crime will be abated—drunkenness, improvidence lawlessness, and all the powers of evil, will, to a certain extent, disappear.

It must, however, be admitted that education is not enough. The clever man may be a clever rogue; and the cleverer he is, the cleverer rogue he will be. Education, therefore, must be based upon religion and morality; for education by itself will not eradicate vicious propensities. Culture of intellect has but little effect upon moral conduct. You may see clever, educated, literary men with no conduct whatever—wasteful, improvident, drunken, and vicious. It follows, therefore, that education must be based upon the principles of religion and morality.

Nor has the poverty of the people so much to do with their social degradation as is commonly supposed. The question is essentially a moral one. If the income of the laboring community could be suddenly doubled, their happiness would not necessarily be increased, for happiness does not consist in money; in fact, the increased wages might probably prove a curse instead of a blessing. In the case of many, there would be an increased consumption of drink, with the usual results—an increase of drunken violence, and probably an increase of crime.

The late Mr. Clay, chaplain of the Preston House of Correction, after characterizing drunkenness as the GREAT SIN, proceeds: "It still rises, in savage hostility, against every thing allied to order and religion; it still barricades every avenue by which truth and peace seek to enter the poor man's home and heart. . . . . Whatever may be the predominant cause of crime, it is very clear that ignorance, religious ignorance, is the chief ingredient in the character of the criminal. This combines with the passion for liquor, and offenses numberless are engendered by the union."

The late Sir Arthur Helps, when speaking of high and low wages, and of the means of getting and spending money, thus expresses himself on the subject, in his "Friends in Council:"

My own conviction is, that throughout England every year there are sufficient wages given, even at the present low rate, to make the condition of the laboring poor quite different from what it is. But, then, these wages must be well spent. I do not mean that the poor could of themselves alone effect this change; but were they seconded by the advice, the instruction, and the aid (not given in money, or only in money lent to produce the current interest of the day), of the classes above them, the rest the poor might accomplish for themselves. And, indeed, all that the rich could do to elevate the poor could hardly equal the advantage that would be gained by the poor themselves, if they could thoroughly subdue that one vice of drunkenness, the most wasteful of all the vices.

"In the living of the poor (as indeed of all of us) there are two things to be considered; how to get money and how to spend it. Now, I believe, the experience of employers will bear me out in saying that it is frequently found that the man with twenty shillings a week does not live more comfortably, or save more than the man with fourteen shillings—the families of the two men being the same in number and general circumstances. It is probable that unless he have a good deal of prudence and thought, the man who gets at all more than the average of his class does not know what to do with it, or only finds in it a means superior to that which his fellows possess of satisfying his appetite for drinking."

Notwithstanding, however, the discouraging circumstances to which we have referred, we must believe that in course of time, as men's nature becomes improved by education—secular, moral, and religious—they may be induced to make a better use of their means, by considerations of prudence, forethought, and parental responsibility. A German writer speaks of the education given to a child as *a capital*—equivalent to a store of money—placed at its disposal by the parent. The child, when grown to manhood, may employ the education, as he might employ the money, badly; but that is no argument against the possession of either. Of course, the value of education, as of money, chiefly consists in its proper use. And one of the advantages of knowledge is, that the very acquisition of it tends to increase the capability of using it aright; which is certainly not the case with the accumulation of money.

Education, however obtained, is always an advantage to a man. Even as a means of material advancement, it is worthy of being sought after, not to speak of its moral uses as an elevator of character and intelligence. And if, as Dr. Lyon Playfair insists, the competition between industrial nations must before long become a competition mainly of intelligence, it is obvious that England must make better provision for the

education of its industrial classes, or be prepared to fall behind in the industrial progress of nations.

"It would be of little avail," said Dr. Brewster, of Edinburgh, "to the peace and happiness of society, if the great truths of the material world were confined to the educated and the wise. The organization of science thus limited would cease to be a blessing. Knowledge secular, and knowledge divine, the double current of the intellectual life-blood of man, must not merely descend through the great arteries of the social frame; it must be taken up by the minutest capillaries before it can nourish and purify society. Knowledge is at once the manna and the medicine of our moral being. Where crime is the bane, knowledge is the antidote. Society may escape from the pestilence and may survive the famine; but the demon of Ignorance, with his grim adjutants of vice and riot, will pursue her into her most peaceful haunts, destroying our institutions, and converting into a wilderness the paradise of social and domestic life. The state has, therefore a great duty to perform. As it punishes crime, it is bound to prevent it. As it subjects us to laws, it must teach us to read them; and while it thus teaches, it must teach also the ennobling truths which display the power and the wisdom of the great Lawgiver, thus diffusing knowledge while it is extending education; and thus making men contented and happy and humble, while it makes them quiet and obedient subjects."

A beginning has already been made with public-school education. Much still remains to be done to establish the system throughout the empire. At present we are unable to judge of the effects of what has been done. But if general education accomplish as much for England as it has already accomplished for Germany, the character of this country will be immensely improved during the next twenty years. Education has almost banished drunkenness from Germany; and had England no drunkenness no thriftlessness, no reckless multiplication, our social miseries would be comparatively trivial.

We must, therefore, believe that as intelligence extends among the working-class, and as a better moral tone pervades them, there will be a rapid improvement in their sober, thrifty, and provident habits; for these form the firmest and surest foundations for social advancement. There is a growing desire, on the part of the more advanced minds in society, to see the working men take up their right position. They who do society's work—who produce, under the direction of the most intelligent of their number, the wealth of the nation—are entitled to a much higher place than they have yet assumed. We believe in this "good time coming" for working men and women; when an atmosphere of intelligence shall pervade them; when they will prove themselves as enlightened, polite, and independent as the other classes of society. And, as the first and surest step toward this consummation, we counsel them to PROVIDE—to provide for the future as well as for the present; to provide, in times of youth and plenty, against the times of adversity, misfortune and old age.

"If any one intends to improve his condition," said the late William Felkin, Mayor of Nottingham, himself originally a working-man, "he must earn all he can, spend as little as he can, and make what he does spend bring him and his family all the real enjoyment he can. The first saving which a working-man makes out of his earnings is the first step; and, because it is the first, the most important step toward true independence. Now independence is as practicable in the

case of an industrious and economic, though originally poor, workman, as in that of the tradesman or merchant—and as a great and estimable a blessing. The same process must attended to—that is, the entire expenditure being kept below the clear income, all contingent claims being carefully considered and provided for, and the surplus held sacred, to be employed for those purposes, and those only, which duty or conscience may point out as important or desirable. This requires a course of laborious exertion and strict economy, a little foresight, and possibly some privation. But this is only what is common to all desirable objects. And inasmuch as I know what it is to labor with the hands long hours, and for small wages, as well as any workman to whom I address myself, and to practice self-denial withal, I am emboldened to declare from experience that the gain of independence, or rather self-dependence, for which I plead, is worth infinitely more than all the cost of its attainment; and, moreover, that to attain it in a greater or less degree, according to circumstances, is within the power of by far the greater number of skilled workmen engaged in our manufactories."

CHAPTER V.

EXAMPLE OF THRIFT.

"Examples demonstrate the possibility of success.—COLTON.
"The force of his own merit makes his way."—SHAKESPEARE.

"Reader, attend: whether thy soul
Soars Fancy's flight beyond the Pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole
In low pursuit—
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is Wisdom's root."—BURNS.

"In the family, as in the state, the best source of wealth is Economy."—CICERO.

"Right action is the result of right faith; but a true and right faith can not be sustained, deepened, extended, save in a course of right action."—M'COMBIE.

THRIFT is the spirit of order applied to domestic management and organization. Its object is to manage frugally the resources of the family, to prevent waste, and avoid useless expenditure. Thrift is under the influence of reason and forethought, and never works by chance or by fits. It endeavors to make the most and the best of every thing. It does not save money for saving's sake. It makes cheerful sacrifices for the present benefit of others; or it submits to voluntary privation for some future good.

Mrs. Inchbald, author of the "Simple Story," was, by dint of thrift, able to set apart the half of her small income for the benefit of her infirm sister. There were thus about two pounds a week for the maintenance of each. "Many times," she says, "during the winter, when I was crying with cold, have I said to myself, 'Thank God, my dear sister need not leave her cham-